



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO

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23 JUN 00

From: Chief of Naval Operations (N096)  
To: Commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography  
Command (CNMOC)

Subj: METOC COMMUNITY ROLE IN FLEET MARINE MAMMAL SUPPORT

1. As you are aware, the Navy faces ever increasing scrutiny on whether Naval operations may adversely impact marine mammals and/or other marine animal species. This situation is challenging the Navy to find the means to assess these impacts and mitigate them. Marine Mammal Initiative Integrated Product Teams (IPTs) have been established at the CNO level. N096 is represented on both the Research and Development (R&D) (to be renamed Data Acquisition and Integration (IPT)), headed by N45, and the Operational Acquisition and Planning/Environmental IPT, headed by N3/N5. The Meteorology and Oceanographic (METOC) community, with its unique capability to deliver environmental information to the fleet, is poised to play a vital role in helping the Navy meet these challenges.

2. Within the rapidly evolving CNO efforts, the immediate role for the METOC community is the successful transition and implementation of the Living Marine Resource Information System (LMRIS). This letter provides direction for this transition, and delineates responsibilities for further METOC involvement in the CNO marine mammal program efforts.

3. NAVO will host the LMRIS and follow on database and modeling products. Because LMRIS is populated with publicly available data, and its success will depend on acquisition of a wide variety of non-Navy data, this system shall be made available without restriction (i.e. web-based) to Navy and other potential users. NAVO support responsibility remains first and foremost to Navy fleet users.

4. Responsibility for generating requirements and identifying R&D resources and opportunities (for LMRIS and other potential environmental decision aids) will be maintained at CNO (N45) (and, ostensibly, be developed in conjunction with the IPTs defined above). As such, they will retain cognizance over the updating and maintenance of LMRIS. CNO (N096) will examine and apply N096 programmed resources as applicable to ensure compatibility of products with the METOC product suite, and to provide METOC environmental expertise to the development efforts. NAVO expertise and resources will be applied in consonance with this effort.

5. CNMOC will, in coordination with N096, develop a CONOPS for NAVO and fleet METOC officers to deliver LMRIS information to Navy forces. As a climatological database, LMRIS can currently provide the most value to the environmental planner at the Fleet level (Fleet N46 code). While afloat operators will certainly express interest in mammal information, it is

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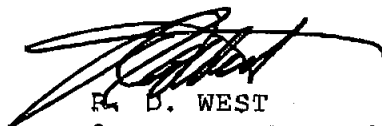
imperative to stress that LMRIS currently does not predict or reflect real time marine mammal locations. METOC Concept of Operations (CONOPS) should reflect this focus. As LMRIS capabilities evolve, this CONOPS will be revisited.

6. CNMOC will provide training to appropriate METOC personnel on capabilities and use of LMRIS.

7. The potential value of fleet observing programs, both visual and acoustic, is being addressed by CNO working groups and CNO (N45) program management. CNMOC shall prepare to assist in these programs with the use of survey resources to test observational concepts, but will await further direction on this effort, pending IPT recommendations. Ingest of whale observation data into databases and models will be addressed under the appropriate CNO IPT and N45/N096 programs.

8. CNO (N096), as Naval Deputy to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), will coordinate with NOAA and the National Marine Fisheries Service to maximize cooperation and partnership in the development and maintenance of marine mammal information products.

9. Continued close coordination between our staffs is imperative to ensure that METOC is represented and employed most effectively in this effort. My point of contact on this issue is CDR Karen Kohanowich, (202) 762-0274.



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Oceanographer of the Navy

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